

IN THE CLAIMS

Please cancel claims 1-22 without prejudice or disclaimer of the subject matter thereof, and substitute therefore the following new claims:

23. A liquid pressure transfer method for a loop shaped workpiece, comprising:
supporting a transfer film on a surface of a transfer liquid by floating the transfer film thereon, the transfer film having a decorative transfer pattern printed thereon;

downwardly immersing the workpiece in the transfer liquid so as to transfer the transfer pattern to a surface of the workpiece for decorating the workpiece;

wherein the loop shaped workpiece is immersed in the transfer liquid in said downwardly immersing so that a cross section of the loop shaped workpiece is defined along a plane of the surface of the transfer liquid at a transfer initiating site;

wherein said downwardly immersing comprises substantially concurrently contacting a circumference of a cross section of the loop shaped workpiece with the transfer film at the transfer initiating site, the cross section taken substantially in a thickness direction of the loop shaped workpiece, the thickness direction being perpendicular to a longitudinal direction of the loop shaped workpiece, and the longitudinal direction being a direction in which the loop shaped workpiece extends;

wherein said downwardly immersing comprises moving the loop shaped workpiece along the longitudinal direction thereof at the transfer initiating site so as to continuously immerse the workpiece in the transfer liquid while maintaining the attitude of the workpiece to the surface of the transfer liquid the same;

transferring at least one of the loop shaped workpiece and the transfer film during said downwardly immersing; and

feeding a portion of the transfer film which has not yet been used for transfer printing so as to surround the circumference of the cross section of the loop shaped workpiece to ensure transfer of the transfer pattern to the surface of the workpiece.

required
must circular
workpiece in
depth-wise

24. The liquid pressure transfer method of claim 23, wherein a relative transfer speed between the loop shaped workpiece and the transfer film is set so that an immersion rate of the loop shaped workpiece and a feed rate of the transfer film can be maintained substantially equal.

25. The liquid pressure transfer method of claim 24, wherein a deflection angle defined between a plane in which the longitudinal direction extends and a relative movement direction of the transfer film is set to be within a range of plus or minus 90 degrees.

26. The liquid pressure transfer method of claim 24, wherein an immersion attitude angle defined between a plane in which the longitudinal direction extends and the surface of the transfer liquid is set to be within a range of plus or minus 10 to 90 degrees.

27. The liquid pressure transfer method of claim 24, wherein:
the loop shaped workpiece comprises a steering wheel component having a transfer-not-required portion;
said downwardly immersing comprises initially immersing the steering wheel component in the transfer liquid at the transfer-not-required portion; and
said moving the loop shaped workpiece in the longitudinal direction comprises rotating the steering wheel component while maintaining the attitude of the workpiece to the surface of the transfer liquid the same at the transfer initiating site during transfer of the transfer pattern.

28. The liquid pressure transfer method of claim 24, wherein:
the loop shaped workpiece comprises a steering wheel component having a front side and a rear side, the front side defined as being intended to face a driver's seat when mounted on a vehicle and the rear side defined as being substantially out of view from a driver's seat when mounted on a vehicle; and

said downwardly immersing comprises immersing the steering wheel component such that the transfer pattern is transferred to the surface of the steering wheel component with a joint line of the transfer pattern formed on the rear surface of the steering wheel component.

29. A decorated product made from a loop shaped workpiece by the method of claim 24, whereby the transfer pattern is substantially free of distortion in the longitudinal direction.

30. The liquid pressure transfer method of claim 23, wherein a deflection angle defined between a plane in which the longitudinal direction extends and a relative movement direction of the transfer film is set to be within a range of plus or minus 90 degrees.

31. The liquid pressure transfer method of claim 30, wherein an immersion attitude angle defined between a plane in which the longitudinal direction extends and the surface of the transfer liquid is set to be within a range of plus or minus 10 to 90 degrees.

32. The liquid pressure transfer method of claim 30, wherein:
the loop shaped workpiece comprises a steering wheel component having a transfer-not-required portion;

said downwardly immersing comprises initially immersing the steering wheel component in the transfer liquid at the transfer-not-required portion; and

said moving the loop shaped workpiece in the longitudinal direction comprises rotating the steering wheel component while maintaining the attitude of the workpiece to the surface of the transfer liquid the same at the transfer initiating site during transfer of the transfer pattern.

33. The liquid pressure transfer method of claim 30, wherein:
the loop shaped workpiece comprises a steering wheel component having a front side and a rear side, the front side defined as being intended to face a driver's seat when mounted on a

vehicle and the rear side defined as being substantially out of view from a driver's seat when mounted on a vehicle; and

said downwardly immersing comprises immersing the steering wheel component such that the transfer pattern is transferred to the surface of the steering wheel component with a joint line of the transfer pattern formed on the rear surface of the steering wheel component.

34. A decorated product made from a loop shaped workpiece by the method of claim 30, whereby the transfer pattern is substantially free of distortion in the longitudinal direction.

35. The liquid pressure transfer method of claim 23, wherein an immersion attitude angle defined between a plane in which the longitudinal direction extends and the surface of the transfer liquid is set to be within a range of plus or minus 10 to 90 degrees.

36. The liquid pressure transfer method of claim 35, wherein:
the loop shaped workpiece comprises a steering wheel component having a transfer-not-required portion;
said downwardly immersing comprises initially immersing the steering wheel component in the transfer liquid at the transfer-not-required portion; and
said moving the loop shaped workpiece in the longitudinal direction comprises rotating the steering wheel component while maintaining the attitude of the workpiece to the surface of the transfer liquid the same at the transfer initiating site during transfer of the transfer pattern.

37. The liquid pressure transfer method of claim 35, wherein:
the loop shaped workpiece comprises a steering wheel component having a front side and a rear side, the front side defined as being intended to face a driver's seat when mounted on a vehicle and the rear side defined as being substantially out of view from a driver's seat when mounted on a vehicle; and

said downwardly immersing comprises immersing the steering wheel component such that the transfer pattern is transferred to the surface of the steering wheel component with a joint line of the transfer pattern formed on the rear surface of the steering wheel component.

38. A decorated product made from a loop shaped workpiece by the method of claim 35, whereby the transfer pattern is substantially free of distortion in the longitudinal direction.

39. The liquid pressure transfer method of claim 23, wherein:
the loop shaped workpiece comprises a steering wheel component having a transfer-not-required portion;
said downwardly immersing comprises initially immersing the steering wheel component in the transfer liquid at the transfer-not-required portion; and
said moving the loop shaped workpiece in the longitudinal direction comprises rotating the steering wheel component while maintaining the attitude of the workpiece to the surface of the transfer liquid the same at the transfer initiating site during transfer of the transfer pattern.

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40. The liquid pressure transfer method of claim 39, wherein:
the steering wheel component having a front side and a rear side, the front side defined as being intended to face a driver's seat when mounted on a vehicle and the rear side defined as being substantially out of view from a driver's seat when mounted on a vehicle; and
said downwardly immersing comprises immersing the steering wheel component such that the transfer pattern is transferred to the surface of the steering wheel component with a joint line of the transfer pattern formed on the rear surface of the steering wheel component.

41. A decorated product made from a loop shaped workpiece by the method of claim 39, whereby the transfer pattern is substantially free of distortion in the longitudinal direction.

42. The liquid pressure transfer method of claim 23, wherein:

the loop shaped workpiece comprises a steering wheel component having a front side and a rear side, the front side defined as being intended to face a driver's seat when mounted on a vehicle and the rear side defined as being substantially out of view from a driver's seat when mounted on a vehicle; and

said downwardly immersing comprises immersing the steering wheel component such that the transfer pattern is transferred to the surface of the steering wheel component with a joint line of the transfer pattern formed on the rear surface of the steering wheel component.

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und 43. A decorated product made from a loop shaped workpiece by the method of claim 42, whereby the transfer pattern is substantially free of distortion in the longitudinal direction.

44. A decorated product made from a loop shaped workpiece by the method of claim 23, whereby the transfer pattern is substantially free of distortion in the longitudinal direction.

IN THE ABSTRACT

Please substitute the original abstract with the enclosed substitute abstract.